

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Saturday, December 18. 1708.

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I Am not very forward of late, Gentlemen, to tell you when you do well, for you are apt enough to think you do so always; but when you push at Extraordinaries, I must do you Justice; and tho' this is a farther Parenthesis to the long Story of *Scots* Persecution, and Mr. *Rebearsal* is heaping up Materials for farther Detestation, which shall come in their Course; suffer me, Gentlemen, to say a Word or two about a Bill depending, or order'd to be brought into the *House of Commons* to prevent the Plundering the Ships, that happen in Distress to be run on Shoar, shipwreck'd, or otherwise miscarry upon our Coast.

It would make a black Story, should I pretend to give you an Account of the barbarous Treatment, poor shipwreck'd People

meet with upon the Coast of *England*, when they happen to be in Distress; Foreigners would hardly think we were Christians, if they should hear of the Usage poor Men in that miserable Circumstance have met with, when the Country Cannibals have been so far from endeavouring to save the People in Distress, that they have rather taken Care to have no Witnesses of the Rapine they were ready for.

How many Ships, that might have been sav'd, have been torn to pieces; How many Mens Lives, that might have been sav'd, have been willfully let perish, I will not say murder'd, no Man can pretend to give an exact Account of; But I could have Thousands of Witnesses to prove the Robbery, the Cruelty, the Barbarity of our People upon

upon the Coast of *England*, when Ships have come on Shoar in Distress.

Let the Town of *Deal* tell the World, how in the great Storm their Boats went off with the utmost Hazard to save the Wreck, and get Plunder, and how they let the poor perishing Wretches, that were standing on the *Goodwin* Sands, stretch out their Hands to them for Help in vain, deluding their dying Hopes, letting them see, these Monsters pursue a Piece of a Wreck, and leave the Tide to flow over those miserable Creatures without any Compassion.

It is true, this was their Negative Behaviour only, and only shews their Humanity, that when the Men of War were driven by the Violence of that horrible Tempest on the *Goodwin* Sands, and lay beating there to pieces with the Waves, the poor distress'd Mariners got upon the Sands, which at low Water ebb'd dry— And from the Shoar several Hundred of them were perceiv'd walking dry on the Sands in the utmost Despair, running about like People out of their Wits, wringing their Hands, and making all the Signals of distressed Wretches just launching into Eternity, for they were all sure to be overwhelm'd upon the Return of the Tide— A Sight that would have mov'd the Heart of a *Mahometan*, and have made Men of the least Humanity, have run any tollerable Risk to have assisted them— The Mayor of the Town at that time, I have been told, did all he could to encourage Men to venture, and was the Means of saving a great many of them: But how other Boats roving about for Prey, came almost within Call of the poor Wretches, and put them in Hopes they were design'd for their Relief, and then tantalizing them in the very Moment of Death, turn'd away from them to pursue their fordid Advantage of Plunder, is a Story too sad to relate, and lies as a melancholly Remembrance upon the Consciences of the Persons— All the poor People being wash'd off into another World in a few Hours after— But to come from this to positive Guilt— Let us look not far from the same Place, I can tell you of my my own Knowledge, and not a little to my Loss; when a Ship has come on Shoar

in the Night, and in Distress, and coming gently on Shoar has sat up-right, and the Storm abating, the Cargo might have been sav'd, and perhaps the Ship got ag ain; when these Mountain-Thieves did not rifled the Loading only, but tore the very Ship herself to pieces, before Help could be had, and render'd that desperate, which otherwise might have been sav'd— And in a smaller time than one would think it possible, a whole Ship has been plunder'd and gutted, and the Goods carry'd up the Country, and irretrievably lost.

Were an honest Confession to be made by our *Portland* Cannibals, and Isle of *Wight* Thieves, how many Men they have drown'd and knock'd on the Head, how many they have let drown, that they could have sav'd; I believe, I do them no Wrong, if I should say, they amount to more than the first of these Islands has now alive in it.

Nor is this Evil without its Excursion against Heaven too, for the abominable Wretches to satisfy their rapacious Consciences, and flatter themselves with the Lawfulness of this Kind of Theft, plead a Property in it, and call it *God's Good*— Mr. *Rehearsal* must pardon me, if the Similitude of Cases almost makes it natural to call it by a Name he is mighty fond of, I mean, DIVINE RIGHT. These Sort of Thieves, and those he calls Monarchs, but in right speaking Tyrants, happen to be in the two Extremes of Wickedness that Mankind is capable of, both claim from the same Original, and I think, it is easie to prove, they do it with the same Authority.

GOD, in his Judgments on the World, having thought fit to correct them in Kind with their own Follies, suffers them to put Kingdoms into the Hands of Land-Monsters, that pretending their Safety and Prosperity devour them they should feed, and murder those that put themselves under their Protection; destroy them that they should preserve, and suck the Blood of those they should nourish at the Expence of their own.— These Things we call Tyrants, a Word of Abhorrence— A Sort of Creature all the Nations in the World have in their Turn expell'd, as noxious to Society, and not fit to be suffer'd among Men— As wild Beasts,



to whom no fair Law is given; as mad Dogs that poison with their Teeth, and the very *Saliva* of their Mouths or Neighbourment they take, infects the World with equal Madness; Crocodiles that delude with their Tears, or Rattle-Snakes that jingle the World into Destruction; painted Death that tickles the Eye, and at the same time consumes the Vitals of a People.

*Tyranny!* A Composition of all Human Plagues, a Bundle of Deaths, a Weed that grows upon the Verge of the Bottomless Pit, cultivated from Hell, and planted by the Devil. TYRANNY! a Medicine for Nations grown waaton with GOD's Goodness, and kicking against their Maker; a Drug—which well dry'd by the Heat of Ambition, pulveris'd in the Mortar that *Solomon* bray'd Fools in, decocted with a proportion'd Quantity of a modern Plant call'd SLAVERY, in about a Tun of a Nation's Tears—Boil'd up to a Consistency by the slow Fire of Oppression, and administer'd in a hot Draught of innocent Blood.—'Tis a Vomit for a whole Nation, which rightly taken, generally works Parliamentarily, and so the Kingdoms heave and cast gradually or legally; but if it be given in a little too large a Quantity, it works violently, and the whole Nation grows sick, and sp...s; then up come Tyrants, ill gotten Conquests, broken Laws, and such Stuff; just as People bewitch'd vomit crooked Pins, old iron, Glass, and any thing the Devil supplies them with.

Just thus these Mountain-Thieves, these Shoar-Devils, when GOD in his Judgments upon particular Persons sends Storms and Shipwrecks, and poor Men in their Distress commit themselves to the Rocks and Shoars, and to their less merciful Inhabitants for Protection and Safety—In this Condition they find to their sad Surprise, that where they expected their Safety, they find their Destruction, and the People into whose Hands they fly from Death, devour them without Compassion——— So they find Death in flying from Death, with this Difference, that they find it from rational Creatures, from whose Humanity they might hope for Deliverance, and die with the utmost Regret.

Thus Plunder and Rapine is their Employment; the Safety of the Distressed, or the Recovery of the Estates of those whose Effects are ventur'd upon the Sea, is none of their Concern, but to make their Gain of other Mens Disasters, and make them miserable whom GOD has afflicted.

I assure you, Gentlemen of *South Britain*, in the *North*, as poor as you pretend they are, it is not so, and we have a late Instance of it, which I can give you of my own Knowledge, when six *Dutch East-India* Ships came a Shoar, in Distress on the Coast of of *Angus* or about *Montrofs*—The Ships are stranded, and some of them lost; but all that could be preserv'd of the Cargoes are carefully sav'd by the Help of the Country, and the very Tackle and Furniture of the Ships sav'd, and lay'd up in Store-Houses, the Gunpowder carry'd to the publick Magazines; the very Money, which we are told, amounts to 600000 *Guilders*, is secur'd, and true Accounts taken of every thing for the Owners—And the Owners honestly vested in them, upon paying a moderate Solvage to the then Lord Admiral of *Scotland*, whose Officers took Care of them——The poor Men at the same time were industriously assisted to save their Lives, and treated with all possible Humanity and Charity.

This is in our *Northern* barbarous Country of *Scotland*, as some that know it not are fond of calling it; whereas had these poor People met with this Distress on the *Goodwin* or *Portland Beach*, or indeed any where upon our more Christian Shoar—The Ships had been torn to pieces, the Goods rifled, the Money dispos'd of, *having no Ear Mark*, and the poor *Dutch* Men turn'd a Drift to feed Herrings, that they might tell no Tales.

In short, if the Parliament can effectually suppress this abominable scandalous Practice, so dishonourable to the whole Nation, so injurious to Trade, so fatal to the poor distressed Seamen, and so many ways hateful to all honest Men, they will do the best Action that has been done within these Walls, since the passing the Treaty of *Union*, or that perhaps will be done by them for a hundred Years to come.

A D.